1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

THE TODAS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

101
114
175

THE people whose manners and customs I am about to describe live on the undulating plateau of the Nilgiri Hills in Southern India. The hills were visited by a Portuguese missionary in 1602, and have been invaded by Indian tribes on various occasions, but, at the beginning of the last century, the plateau and its inhabitants were absolutely unknown to Europeans. The earliest definite information about the hills at this time is given in a letter from William Keys, an assistant revenue surveyor, written in 1812, but it was not till several years later that further information about the people began to be published.

Of the various tribes inhabiting the hills, the Todas excited the greatest interest, and this interest has continued, partly because the people are so different from any other of the races by which they are surrounded, but still more because both they and their customs are so picturesque and, in many ways, so unique.

A very large literature[1] has accumulated about the Todas and their customs. This literature is so extensive that when I determined to go to the Nilgiri Hills, I was reproached by more than one anthropologist for going to people about whom we already knew so much; and one even said that, so far as his department of knowledge was concerned, he was sure that we had all the information we could expect to get.

[1] The bibliography of this literature is given in Appendix II.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda
693

CHAPTER XXX

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE TODAS

I HAVE now given the whole of the material which I have collected on the institutions of the Todas. In describing these institutions I have discussed various general problems suggested by their nature, but I have said little about the points of resemblance or difference between the customs of the Todas and those of other peoples either in India or elsewhere. It remains in this last chapter to see how far the evidence which I have given throws any light on the very difficult questions: Who are the Todas? How do they come to be living on the Nilgiri Hills?

The evidence which might be available for our inquiry is of three kinds: records of the Todas in the past, traditions preserved by the Todas, and, lastly, evidence derived from the comparative study of physical and psychical characters, language, beliefs, and institutions.

The evidence coming under the first two heads is of the scantiest. Our earliest record of the Todas is contained in a Portuguese manuscript now in the British Museum. It records the visit of a Portuguese priest named Finicio to the Nilgiri Hills in 1602. This manuscript was partially translated and published by Thomas Whitehouse in a book dealing with the Syrian church of Malabar, under the title "Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land." As the translation given by Whitehouse is incomplete, I had the manuscript retranslated, and it was then found that several interesting details had been omitted, and that there were several errors in the translation, The new translation is given on pp. 721–730.

1; Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

114
175 The account given by Finicio is very superficial, being the result of only two days' intercourse, but it is sufficient to show that there has probably been little change in the Todas and their surroundings in the three centuries which elapsed between his visit and mine. I have referred in the general body of the work to several of the points in which his account either corroborates or differs from my own. Perhaps the most important feature of his story is that it shows the relation between the Todas and Badagas three centuries ago to have been very much what it is at the present day, and shows clearly that this relation between the two tribes is of longer standing than has usually been supposed. Finicio's account is, however, so brief and superficial that it helps us little in our search for evidence on the evolution of Toda society. We know from it that the institution of the *ti* was in existence, and the scanty evidence goes to show that the life of the *palol* was much what it is now, but there is nothing to tell us whether the ritual had then reached the high pitch of development which it now shows, nothing to tell us whether since that time there has been development or degeneration.

From 1602 to 1812 we have, so far as I am aware, no record of the Todas. In the latter year William Keys, Assistant Revenue Surveyor, reported the existence of the Todas, or Thothavurs, and other tribes in a letter to the Collector of Coimbatore. His account gives little information about the Todas, except that they kept buffaloes and held it a sacred and inviolable custom to keep their heads uncovered. In 1819 "a Subscriber" wrote an account of the Nilgiri tribes which was published in the *Madras Courier*. Beyond a description of their appearance, the only information given about the Todas or Todevies is that it is against the custom to wear either turban or sandal, that they permit hair and beard to grow long, and that the Badagas pay a few handfuls of grain from each field as acknowledgment that they received their land from the Todas. In 1820 Lieutenant Macpherson reported the practices of polyandry and infanticide, and in the following year Captain B. S. Ward described the marriage customs more fully, and gave some account

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

of the dairies and priesthood. In 1826 the Rev. James Hough addressed a number of letters to the Bengal Hurkaru, giving an account of the Nilgiris and their inhabitants, and these letters were republished in a book in 1829. A more elaborate and most excellent account of the Todas was given by Captain Harkness in 1832, in a work entitled *A Description of a Singular Aboriginal Race Inhabiting the Summit of the Neilgherry Hills*, and since that time very many of those who have visited the Nilgiri Hills have had something to say about the Todas and their ways. As I have already pointed out, these records from the earlier part of last century differ but little from my own, and do not furnish us with any evidence that Toda customs underwent any great change during that century.

As regards the evidence from Toda tradition, we are in no better case. Several writers have stated that the Todas believe that they came to the Nilgiris from elsewhere, but whenever I made any inquiries on this point I was assured that they had always been on the Nilgiri Hills, the first Toda having been created on the Kundahs in the manner already described.

It seems most probable that those who have ascribed such traditions to the Todas have been misled by the account of the Kamasòdrolam. These are the people who are believed to have been driven away from Kanòdrs by Kwoten (see p. 195). The Todas have a very sincere belief in the existence of these people, and when I showed one man the frontispiece in Marshall's book, representing a Toda village and its inhabitants, something unfamiliar in the arrangement of the scene made the man think that it must be a picture of the Kamasòdrolam. Any Toda who is asked whether there are other Todas and where they live will at once think of the Kamasòdrolam and will tell of these people, and the story might easily be mistaken for a tradition of their origin.

The Todas are also said to believe in their descent from Ravan, and I was told by one man that they were descended from the Pandavas, but I have little doubt that such beliefs are only recent additions to their mythology.

In studying the origin and history of the Todas we have

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda
719

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

175

I give here a translation of two extracts from Portuguese manuscripts preserved in the British Museum. The original spelling of the names of places and persons has been preserved and I have added some notes. I am indebted for the translation to Miss A. de Alberti.

The Mission of Todramala.[1]—This new mission of Todramala belongs to the college of Vaipicotta, and it seems necessary to give your Rev. an account thereof that you may be informed of what has been discovered, as well as of what still remains to be done. Vague rumours had reached the Lord Bishop Dom Frco. Ros that in the interior of this Malabar, among some mountains, there dwelt a race of men descended from the ancient Christians of S. Thomas; in order to discover and open the way to them he sent from our seminary a Cassanar[2] and a Chamas, which means a priest and a deacon, who after travelling for more than fifty miles reached the summit of the mountain of Todramala. Here they came upon a race which appeared, in accordance with the rumour, to be of those who were driven from the territory of S. Thome by the many wars in former times and scattered through these parts. They did not call it by that name, however, but pointing in the direction of S. Thomas, they said that certain men came thence, some of whom settled in those mountains, and others went further down, of whom they knew nothing. The Cassamar thereupon took occasion to ingratiate himself with them, saying that those who settled lower

[1] Add. MS. 9853, pp. 464-5, MS. 25-26 vol. [Translation].
[2] Or Cattanar, a native priest of the Syrian Church.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175 down were his ancestors, and therefore they were all of one race, and they had come solely to visit them as their brethren and relations. This moved them to such love and pity that men, women, and children embraced and welcomed them with tears. They found no trace of Christianity in them; they had neither crosses nor books, though they said they had some once, but they were lost as those who could read had died out. They have no pagoda worship nor pagan ceremonies. On being questioned concerning their god they spoke of a bird, a father, and a son, from which it may be presumed that they had some notion of the Blessed Trinity. They rejoiced to hear of the creation of the world and other discourses which the Cassamar and the Chamas held with them; and they were very eager that they should remain with them a long while, but they could not do so, as their guide was very pressing that they should return. They are a somewhat white-skinned race and tall of stature; they grow long beards and wear their hair after the ancient Portuguese fashion, bushy on the head and falling on the shoulders behind. They have necessaries in abundance, namely, rice, some wheat, vegetables, and meat in great variety, both fowls and wild game; quantities of cattle, and so much milk that they cannot use it all and give it to the very cattle to drink. Many other things were related of their customs which I leave until more is known of them. Upon this information the Father Vice-Provincial, at the instance of the Bishop, resolved to send thither a priest well acquainted with the Malabar tongue, and therefore he commissioned the father who was going to the residence of Calicut to inquire the easiest road and best season for this mission. He found that it was much nearer Calicut through the territory of the Samorim, and that the best time was the month of January, when, by the help of God, a father will set out with several Cassamars, and of what occurs your Rev. will be informed next year.

The Mission of Todamalê.[1]—Last year your Rev. received a brief account of a new mission destined for Todamalê to a certain race dwelling in the interior of this country of Malabar, among rugged mountains, at a distance of fifty leagues or thereabouts. These were supposed to be descendants of the Christians of S. Thomas who had somehow drifted to those parts. Though last year the Bishop of Angamale, Dom Frco. Ros, sent a priest belonging to the Christians

[1] Add. MS. 9853, p. 479. MS. 40 vol. [Translation].

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175

of S. Thomas, accompanied by a deacon and a good guide, to explore the land and acquire information concerning this race, they did not bring back such full and certain intelligence as was desired. Therefore the Lord Bishop asked our Vice-Provincial to send one of our fathers, and the choice fell upon Father Yacomo Fenicio,[1] who has known the people of Malabar for many years and is well acquainted with their language. The father set out from Calicut, where he resides, and whence the road is easiest, and with the assistance of good guides reached the desired destination, though at the cost of great labour and risk. Having acquired ample information, he returned to Calicut from Thodomala, and on his arrival wrote a letter to the Vice-Provincial, dated the 1st of April, 1603, giving him an account of his discoveries, of which the following is a copy—

Copy of a letter from FATHER YACOME FINICIO *to the* VICE-PROVINCIAL OF CALICUT, *1st of April*, 1603

Thanks be to God, I am returned from Todamalá, though with great labour and little satisfaction, for I did not find there what we hoped and were led to expect. And as the prosecution or abandonment of this mission depends upon it, I think it necessary to give you here a detailed account of all I discovered and endured. The road by Charti being impracticable on account of the wars which had broken out among the people, I was obliged to go by Manarechatem, and this was providential for us, it being the road taken by the Cacmar whom the bishop sent last year. It is thirteen leagues from the shore of Tanor. So far the way was safe and easy, this being the territory of the Samorim, and in every village we met people who knew our Christian Errari,[2] the nephew of the Samorim, who accompanied me. I was very glad of his company, because he offered it himself, and because he could speak Canara, the language of the Badegas, neighbours of the Todares. Before we reached Marurachate we had an interview with the chief ruler of the Samorim, who lives within two leagues. I gave him a palm-leaf from Carnor, chief ruler of the Samorim, in which he bade him give me the men and assistance necessary for my journey to Todamalá, and to go with me himself if necessary. The ruler welcomed us with many

[1] In the translation given by Whitehouse the name of this priest is given as Furreira.

[2] A member of the Errari or cowherd caste.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175 compliments, but as regards the journey he made many difficulties, and not only he, but many others of that place said that the way was very long and full of wild and rugged mountains; that there were elephants and tigers, that it was very cold up there, and finally that there was a risk that some of us would die. The ruler wished to send two Naires, who knew the way, with me, but they would not go for fear of falling sick, even though I would have paid them well. Finding that they made so many difficulties I pressed the Errari to return to Calicut with his people, as it was feared that they would fall sick upon the way, and I would go to Manaracathe and there provide myself with a guide and escort. This touched the Errari upon a point of honour, and he bade me not to speak of such a thing, for he was resolved to go, and his Naires had all bound themselves by an oath to go likewise. The Errari had with him a Varser,[1] which is little less than a Brahmin, and he said to me, "Father, if I die on the road, bury me where you will; it is of no consequence." I asked another young Naire if he wished to go, and he replied, "I will accompany your Reverence while I have breath." Upon this we took leave of the ruler and went to Manarecathe, where we found the very chatim who went with the Cacenar; however, the Errari thought it best to take another more trustworthy, who had relatives in the country. Here we were told that it was six Canara leagues to Todamalá, which is twelve Malabar leagues, and that it would take two days and a half to get there. Everyone provided himself with clothes against the cold of Todamalá, and with provisions for the journey; also with pots which the Naires carried on their heads, not for want of coolies, but because the Naires and Brahmins will not allow those of a different caste to touch the pots in which they cook their rice. The arms were left behind that the natives might not suppose that the people of Malabar had come to fight with them. Thus we set out cheerfully, and the first day, as we could not reach a village before night, we dined, and started between eight and nine in the morning, and marched quickly until evening that we might not be benighted in the thicket, for fear of the elephants, and yet our guide said we had only travelled two Canara leagues. That day we crossed a sandy mountain.

The second day we wished to start at dawn, but we met fifteen or sixteen men of that village coming by the road we were to pursue, all armed, and they told us that there were three elephants in the

[1] ? Vaishya.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175

way, so we waited until nine o'clock and in the meantime the elephants sought their pasture. This second day we supped at the foot of a very high mountain over which our road lay, and as there was no village and there were elephants about, after supper we climbed part of the mountain and slept there. After midnight we climbed nearly all the rest of the mountain by moonlight, with great labour and fatigue. On reaching the summit other great mountains appeared, and others beyond them, at which we were all astounded, for some of them were so steep that we were obliged to descend in a sitting posture. When the Errari found himself on these mountains, he said that God was punishing him for his sins, and that going up and down such mountains would shorten their lives by ten years. The chatim, our guide, looking down from a mountain, said that merely looking down dazzled his eyes, and so said the Naires on other occasions in similar circumstances. But I could not restrain my laughter, and began singing hymns in Malabar against pagodas, whereupon the others laughed too, and joined in the hymns. It was now noon, and we had still another mountain to climb before reaching the village of the Badagas, neighbours of the Thodares, but we were so tired that we could go no further. We wished to dine, and there was very good cold water flowing from a mountain, but we had no fire. The Errari offered to go up with the Brahmin and to send us down a light. I would not suffer him to take so much trouble, nor was it necessary, for the chatim, our guide, struck fire from two twigs, and thereupon everyone sat down to rest, cooking his rice meanwhile. When we had rested we climbed the mountain and reached the village of the Badagas. It is a village of 150 to 200 souls, called Melcuntaõ.[1] The Cacenar is reported to have visited it. Here we found the chief of the Todeos and spoke with him. He promised to go and assemble the rest, that we might speak to them. In this village they have fowls, cows, goats, rice, lentils, mustard seed, garlick, and honey. They brought me some wheat in the husk, which was very difficult to remove, and therefore it seemed to me more like barley or some other grain than wheat. The Badagas are like the Malabars, and they say there are two other villages like this in these mountains, four, five, and six leagues distant from each other. These trade with the Thodares and sell them rice, buying buffalo butter from them, which they carry to Manaracathe for sale. The next day I wished to discourse to these Badagas concerning our

[1] Whitehouse suggests that this is Melur.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

● 175 law. I showed them the pictures of Our Lady of St. Luke, telling them that the child was God, who became man to teach us his law and save us. I showed them a gilt Bible and told them that it was the book of our law, and as they all surrounded me, I went up into a high place and the Errari with me. I spoke in Malabar and the Errari interpreted in Canara, which is their language. A Badaga who understood Malabar could not contain himself, but came up to where I was and spoke to me in Topas.[1] Then I taught him that the law given to us by the God made man was contained in ten commandments, &c., and they all rejoiced at the ten commandments and their explanation. Only at the sixth[2] commandment the Topas Badaga represented to me that the Malabars also had many wives. I told him that this law was not the law of the Malabars, but of God, and that they did wrong in having many wives, whereupon he was satisfied. Finally I told him that I had not come to teach the Thodares only, but them also if they would accept this law. They replied that the law was very good, but they did not dare adopt it, neither could I live in these barren mountains, &c. I make no doubt that if a priest were there they would all be converted. While I was in this village of Melentaõ the priest of the Thodares came thither, but he remained outside the village, for he may not touch a woman. I went to see him and found him seated on the ground with seven or eight others seated near him. He was a huge man, well proportioned, with a long beard and hair like a Nazarene falling on his shoulders, the front hair drawn back over his head, leaving his forehead uncovered. His dress was a shawl from the waist to the knees, and the rest of his body was naked; he held a sickle in his hand. When I had come up to him and sat down, he asked me how I was; I replied that I was well and all the better for meeting him, for it proved to me that God was my guide, since I had come from so far to see the Thodares and immediately met with their chief. He asked the purpose of my coming. I replied that I had come to see the Thodares, having heard that we were of the same race and laws, and that last year one of our people visited them and gave us a very good account of them. I asked him if they knew from whom they were descended. He said no, and thereupon would have taken leave of us. Then I said that it was not right to wish to leave us so soon, since we had come so far solely to visit them, and

[1] I do not know the meaning of this. One caste of the Badagas is called Topya.

[2] Seventh?

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

upon this he remained. Then I inquired of those around who he was, and what was his office. They replied that he was called Pallem and was like the Belicha Paro among the Malabars. Belichaparo is he who takes care of the pagoda, and sometimes the devil enters into him, and he trembles and rolls upon the ground, and answers questions put to him in the name of the pagoda. I asked if the Thodares had pagodas; they replied that they had a live buffalo cow for a pagoda, and they hung a bell round its neck, and the Pallem offered it milk every day, and then let it loose in the fields to graze with the rest. And every month or thereabouts, the Pallem seizes the buffalo by the horns and trembles, saying that the buffalo bids them change the pasture, and thereupon they change their place and pasture. By the milk and butter of this buffalo and that of its children and grandchildren, which already reach 120, this Pallem is maintained. On this mountain where I was there were 100 Thodares,[1] and they had three pallems between them, each having his buffalo for a pagoda. When the buffalo dies the Thodares assemble, choose one of these hundred, tie the bell round its neck, and it becomes a pagoda. Besides the buffalo they have 300 pagodas to whom they also make offerings of milk. I asked him why he carried the sickle in his hand, and he replied that God commanded him to carry no other arm or stick but only that sickle. He used it to scratch his head, which was swarming with lice, and they could be seen crawling among his hair. I asked if he was married; he answered that he and his younger brother were married to the same woman, but as he might not touch a woman in the house she always lived with his brother, but he sent for her into the bush every week or so, when it was a fine day. And when he liked he sent for any of the wives of the Thodares whom he chose, and the husbands allowed it so long as he paid them. I asked if they had books and he said no; none of them can read or write. He also told me that they had a father whom God took up to heaven, body and soul, and the buffaloes looked up to heaven after him, and that was why they made offerings to the buffaloes. At last I gave him one of the looking-glasses from Calicut, with which he was very pleased and said he would give it to his wife. Then I took leave of him, after showing him the pictures and Bible, at which he wondered. Besides this pallem they have another whom they call Ferral,[2] who is present

[1] By the context this should be 100 buffalo cows.

[2] Evidently the *wurzol*.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175 when they give the buffaloes salt water, and he trembles, bidding them give them drink, and they will give much milk, and grow fat, and give butter in plenty, &c.

The next day we went to visit the villages of the Thodares. We climbed quite half a league above this village, and on reaching the summit nothing was visible on every side but mountains and valleys; all was desert without a single fruit or forest tree, excepting in an occasional damp place where there were a few forest trees. There are no palm trees or jacks in all these mountains, nor any fruit trees, as I have said. As we traversed these mountains and valleys, every now and then we saw a herd of buffaloes in the distance with a Thodar or two guarding them. In this way we met four or five Thodares and sent them to fetch the rest. As no women were visible, I promised one a looking-glass if he would go and fetch them. He hastened away up a mountain and brought back four women, who remained at a distance through timidity and would not join the rest. I sent them word that they must approach if they wanted looking-glasses, and then they came up. After this we went on for another half a league or more and came upon two Thodar huts at the foot of a mountain. They were like a large barrel half buried in the ground, or like a covered bier. They were nine spans in length and the same in breadth; and six spans in the highest part. The hoops of the barrel were of thick reeds like Indian cane, bent into a hoop with both ends fixed in the ground. Pieces of wood from the bush were laid across these reeds and covered with grass. The front was made of stakes set on end, like organ pipes, with no other filling whatever. The door was a span and four inches wide, and two spans and an inch high, so that the Errari and myself could scarcely enter, and inside we had to kneel. There were two beds with grass mattresses on each side, and a small pit in the middle of the hut which was the fireplace. There was a little window on one side, a finger's length high and a span wide. Beside these houses was a pen for buffaloes, and close by another little house where they make the butter. They said the other houses were half a league distant from each other. Thirty or forty Thodares assembled; they are clothed in a large sheet with no other covering but a small loincloth four or five fingers wide. Their arms are long sticks smeared with butter; when new they look like strips of white paper at a distance, but they cure them and they turn black. They wear long beards, and rather long hair, but not so

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175

long as the Pallem. It was two months since I had shaved or cut my hair, so that I looked like one of them, and they did not wonder at me as they did at the Cacenar, who went there with no hair or beard. They never shave except when one of them dies. At a death they kill half of the dead man's buffaloes, and the other half goes to his heirs. If he has no buffaloes each person gives one, and half of them are killed and the rest are left. They burn the dead body, but it must be wrapped in a veil of pure silk, which they call a toda-pata, worth five or six fanams; and if this is lacking they must wait for it, though it be for a year. In the meantime, in order to preserve the body they open it at the loins, take out the entrails, and cut off the occiput; then they place it in an arbour and dry it in the smoke. Two brothers marry the same woman; she lives with the eldest at night, and with the youngest by day. Others have two or three wives. They do not eat fowls, cow's flesh, nor goat, and so they breed none of these. They do not eat buffalo's flesh, but only wild boar and venison. They eat no salt. They have no crops of any kind, and no occupation but the breeding of buffaloes, on whose milk and butter they live. They have no vassals, as was reported; on the contrary, they are subject and pay tribute to the Badega chiefs. When they eat they hold the rice in their left hand, take a lump of butter in the right, mix it with the rice, and so eat it; when their meal is finished they rub their hands together and wipe them on their hair, and so they all smell of butter. In colour they resemble the Malabars, some whiter and some darker; they are generally moderately tall. Their ears are pierced or bored, not long like those of the Malabars, and some wear a silver circle in them like a ring. They wear black threads round their necks, and some have a large silver bead like a pater-noster in front. I had a skein of black thread in my pocket and drew it out; a Thodar seeing it begged it of me earnestly two or three times. I told him that I must give it to the women, and I divided it in four and gave it to the four women above mentioned, and I gave them a looking-glass each, with which they were very delighted. The women wear nothing but a long sheet like the men; they wrap it round them, throwing the right end over the left shoulder, and so cover themselves. Their hair hangs loose, but their faces are uncovered. I said that the women lower down wore bracelets, chains, and jewels on their arms and necks, and in their ears, and thereupon one

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

● 175 of them uncovered her arm, on which she wore four large well-made copper bracelets. The sheet worn by both men and women is so filthy that it looks as if it would not burn if you put it on the fire, and if water were thrown on it, it would not penetrate. The men look after the house, cook the rice, do the milking, make the butter, and mind the buffaloes. The women do nothing but pound the rice, and sometimes mind the buffaloes in the absence of their husbands. In speaking with the Pallem I asked him whether he or his wife cooked the rice; he replied that it was a great disgrace among them to allow the wife to cook the rice. The Thodares being thus assembled, I told them that, hearing that we were of the same race and law, I had come to visit them, and as I knew they had neither priest, book, nor law, I being a priest had come to teach them. I asked if they were glad to have me with them, and they replied that they rejoiced greatly at it. I asked if they would follow all my instructions, and they said they would. Then I asked if they would leave off adoring the buffalo and the 300 pagodas. They replied that they feared the buffaloes and pagodas would do them some harm. I said I would be answerable for it, and that I had more power than the pagodas. Then they said that if I would defend them they would willingly leave off adoring them. I asked if they would give up the custom of two brothers marrying one woman, and they said they would. I asked if they thought it right to give their wives to the Pallem; an old man replied, "If it is the command of God, what can we do?" After this they asked me of their own accord to show them the pictures and the book; I did so, and they paid homage to them with great rejoicing. I also gave them a looking-glass each, and after discoursing and conversing with them for some time I asked them to give me two children to take away with me; they excused themselves, saying that they could not do so just then. I asked from whence they were descended, and one replied that he had heard that they came from the East, and some remained there while some settled lower down. They were amazed at seeing white men, and asked me to uncover my arms for them to look at. They were delighted with the Errari's red tunic and gold buttons, and velvet cap with the gold braid.

At last I took leave of them, promising to return at some time during the year and remain with them longer. It did not seem to me necessary to delay any longer, nor to lay any foundation of our

I: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

faith, as I do not think that the present is a suitable time for the Company to undertake such out-of-the-way enterprises, since it cannot attend to others of greater importance which are close at hand, for want of workers. The Thodares only number a thousand, and these are scattered about four mountains, two belonging to the Malabar, where there are 300. I went to one of these which belongs to the Samorim, another belonging to the Naique, where there are another 300, or a little over; and another belonging to another king, near Charti, where there are another 300 or rather more; the whole distance being eight Canara leagues, which are sixteen in Malabar. And they live scattered about—every month or thereabouts they move their village. The whole district is uninhabited desert. The winds and climate are very cold; the water is excellent, but icy cold; it flows down from the mountains; it cannot be drunk at a draught because of the cold. One is obliged to pause, and after drinking one has to wait awhile for the gums and teeth to get warm. The journey there and back is very laborious and can only be undertaken in January and February. From Manarcate upwards it is impossible to travel in a litter. On the return journey I was very fatigued and asked if it were possible to find men to carry me. I was told that there were plenty of men, but that it was impossible to be carried over these mountains, where one person alone could only climb up and down with great difficulty. Besides this, the Errari and all the rest were very pressing that I should return before any of us fell ill; the Errari said he was himself indisposed, as well as some of the others. They could not tell me anything concerning the Blessed Trinity. I asked them why they wore their hair loose, and a Badaga replied that in the time of Charamparimatei they killed the father of the Thodares, and they asked, "Who killed our father?" and they answered that God killed him; whereupon they unbound their hair and said, "Never will we bind up our hair again until we have killed God, in revenge for our father [and] for the broken pots." On the return journey the Badegas showed us a shorter and less difficult road, which took us two days and a half, but saved going up and down the last steep mountains. However, there was no lack of mountains to climb, but they were not so difficult, though the first day we climbed down one which was very high and steep. We numbered fourteen with the guides. There was a Badega village at the foot of the mountain, and seeing us they took us for a hostile band and fled into the bush. Our

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

175 guides called to them not to fly, for we were men of peace who had been to visit the Thodares, whereupon they returned, and coming down we found them armed with their little lances, but we saw the women and children still hidden in the bush. A little further on we came upon four or five more houses; these people also fled into the bush, the women carrying the children on their backs. The second day we slept in the bush two leagues from Manarecate. There were tigers and elephants about, but God preserved us and we all reached Calicut in safety, thanks be to Our Lord. Several afterwards fell sick, however, among whom was the Variel, who is still suffering. May God restore him, for he has promised me to become a Christian, and has already broken his own laws as regards food, &c.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

847

'We did not kill them to please any God, but because it was our custom.

'The mother never nursed the child—no, never! and the parents did not kill it. How could we do so! Do you think we could kill it ourselves!

'Those tell lies who say we laid it down before the opening of the buffalo pen, so that it might be run over and killed by the animals![2] We never did such things! and it is all nonsense, that we drowned it in buffalo's milk![3]'

'Boys were never killed—only girls; not those who were sickly and deformed—*that would be a sin*—papum; but when we had one girl,[4] or in some families two girls, those that followed were killed.

'This is the way it was done. An old woman—kelachi[5]—used to take the child immediately it was born, and close its nostrils, ears, and mouth, with cloth thus'—here pantomimic action. 'It would shortly droop its head and go to sleep. We then *buried* it in the ground.[6] The kelachi got a present of four annas[7] for the deed.

'I don't know if the infants thus killed, go to amnôr. Who can tell such a thing!'

[2] I find the following passage in a letter from the Collector of Coimbatore, dated 25th June, 1856, to the address of the Secretary to the Government of Fort St. George, very kindly placed at my disposal by the Revenue Department, Madras; 'The mode of destroying the infant, if a female, is by exposing it the next morning at the door of the cattle kraal; when first opened, the whole herd, half wild, rush over and annihilate the wretched infant—the Todas never lifting their own hand against it.'

[3] This response had reference to a report then current, of this second mode of destroying children.

[4] The truth of this statement is confirmed by a letter from Mr. J. Sullivan, Collector of Coimbatore, dated 5th July, 1820, to the Secretary to the Governor of Fort St. George.

[5] Also means 'a female friend.' See Chapter VII., Note 1.

[6] It will be remembered that Todas *burn* their dead. By burying these infants, can it be, that the people thought they had got rid of them *for ever and ever*? Hence my question, to which the next paragraph forms a reply.

[7] Four annas is equal to sixpence of English money.

3; Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

long ago deserted, some of which by the girth of the trees which have since grown up in them, have evidently been abandoned for centuries.

It would appear that the Todas have always maintained some intercourse with the western coast, as the cowrie necklaces of the women imply. The earliest notice of them I know of, is to be found in the Journal of the Archbishop of Goa, Alexo de Meneses; Coimbra, 1606, the following extract from which has been kindly furnished me by Dr. Gundert:—

"From Malabar the Vicars' regular report, from their hitherto neglected and paganised churches, came in to Goa (in 1599). At this time two Cattanars had been to Todamala in the country of the Zamorin, 50 leagues distant from the furthest churches. There (in Todamala) there are still Christians, who speak a language different from the Malabar language. They call their god 'Bidi'* (=fado, fatum). They have a Trinity of persons, viz., an old man, a youth, and a small bird. They say Thomas taught them, but because the king of Mylapūr killed all Christians, they took refuge on these mountains, that there their Cattanars have died, their books have been lost, and all idea of God has disappeared, but still they have a picture very much injured of that Trinity. The objects of that picture they try to keep in mind. They knew that in Cochin there were people of their own caste, on which account they called the two Cattanars brothers, and summoned men and women together to hear them, when the Cattanars explained from the picture the Trinity to the people. The Jesuit Roy was very glad of this report, and spoke of it as not a singular instance. In other places also (near the hills) remains of former Christian congregations were discovered. He (Roy) became Bishop of Angimale in 1601, and Archbishop of Cranganore in 1605."

This report seems to have led to further investigations, as we find by the following abstract of a manuscript in the British Museum kindly furnished me by the Reverend Mr. Whitehouse:—

At the synod of Udiamparūr in the state of Cochin,† held under Archbishop Meneres in 1599, information having been received that there were certain villages of Christians in a country called Todamala, who anciently belonged to the Syrian church of Malabar, but then had nothing of Christianity except the bare name, it was ordered that priests and preachers should be sent thither immediately to redeem them to the Catholic faith, baptize them, &c. Francisco Roy, the first Roman Catholic Bishop of the Syrian Christians, in 1602 sent a priest and deacon of the Christians of St. Thomas with a good guide to find out the place and collect information. They reached the Todamala; but, as the account brought back by them, was not so sure and complete as was desirable, Bishop Roy requested the Vice-Principal of the Jesuits to depute a priest of his own order to make further inquiries. The Rev. Jacome Ferreiri was selected for this mission. He started from Calicut, the place of his residence, and was permitted to return safely, after undergoing great exposure and fatigue, with a good deal of information about the hill tribes, their manners and customs, but with no tidings of any Christian colony, which had either become extinct or removed elsewhere, if it had ever been there at all.

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* Dr. Gundert says, "Bidi or Vidhi is a well-known name of Brahma."

† Todamala is included in a list of Christian churches given in Assemani Bibl. Orient., but this only refers to the date of this same synod.

6/15 At Calicut he wrote a formal report, dated April 1st, 1608, from which the following particulars are gleaned:—

He proceeded viâ Manarecate 13 leagues inland from Tanûr. A native convert, a nephew of the Samuri Rajah, accompanied him, and some others. Their route led them over steep and rugged mountains, infested with elephants and tigers. At Manarecate they were told that the Todamala was 6 Canarese or 12 Malabar leagues distant, and that it would take them two days and a half to reach their destination. Here they provided themselves with extra clothing as a protection against the cold of the mountains, and also provision for their journey. The Nairs who accompanied them wisely left their weapons behind them, lest the hill people should take alarm. The evening of the second day from Manarecate* found them at the foot of a steep hill up which their route lay. On the third day they reach a Badaga village called Melcuntao (? Mêlûr or Mêlkûndah), containing between one and two hundred inhabitants. The priest and deacon previously sent are said to have arrived thus far. Here they met also with the chief of the Todas, who agreed to call his people together so that they might have an opportunity of conversing with them. On the following day the Jesuit father tried to converse with the Badagas on the subject of Christianity. He also had an interview with the Toda priest called Pallem (Pâlâl) outside the Badaga village, which he would not enter for fear of pollution. They saw some Toda women, and gave them looking glasses and hanks of thread, with which they were much pleased. The third day of their sojourn on the hills was spent in a visitation of some of the Toda settlements, which are very correctly described, as also their dress, diet, manners, and customs. They could not give much account of their own origin, and gave no information leading to the supposition that either they or their ancestors ever had anything to do with any form or profession of Christianity. They simply said that they had heard that their ancestors came from the East, that one party settled on these mountains, and another party descended into the plains. Their number was supposed to be about 1,000, scattered pretty equally over four mountain districts. Feeling the cold, and the Samorin's nephew beginning to be indisposed, they now began to arrange for their descent into the low country. Ere they left, they promised to return within a year, and make a longer stay. Circumstances however prevented them from so doing. The friendly Badagas showed them a better road than that by which they made the journey thro.

Very probably the records of the Portuguese missionaries on the Western Coast would furnish us with further information regarding the Todas.

The only other notice (also furnished by Dr. Gundert) I possess, is the following:

Il Viaggio all' Indie Orientale del padre P. Vincenzo Maria di S. Caterina da Siena, Procuratore Generale dei Carmelitani scalzi. Roma 1672, Venetia 1683.

"The Todri, a small tribe of rather fair people on the mountains behind Ponâne in "the kingdom of the Samorin, pay to the buffaloes by which they live. They choose the

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* Mr. Whitehouse says, "I think the Manarecate must be the place called Manaar in Ward's Government "Survey Map, about Lat. 11°, Long. 76° 30', because it was 13 leagues inland from Tanur, and from thence "12 leagues to the Todamala. There is a Manaar at the foot of the Sankapatti Ghât, but this is too near. "This idea receives support from Buchanan's Journey through Mysore and Canara, Vol. ii. p. 494, where he "speaks of a tract of land occupying part of the mountains between Malabar and Coimbatore, divided into two "districts, Attapalli and Agatte-Coilaru, and says that the pass leading to Attapalli is called Manarghât."

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

975 "oldest buffalo cows, hang a miserable little bell on their necks, this is enough to ensure "the buffaloes adoration. The buffaloes are permitted to go about free everywhere, also "into the fields to graze, and everyone considers himself fortunate if they eat something "of his property. Though the buffaloes are very often killed by tigers, the Todas do "not slacken in their worship."

The Carmelite made his journey in 1657, and only heard these reports on the Coast.

173 The Todas themselves have a few stories, which, however, it is very difficult to extract
973 from them. The elder men, who are the chief depositaries of the mythological learning of the tribe, are, native-like, very averse to questions (which always seem to bring before them visions of taxation), and apt to profess entire ignorance. Such traditions as I have obtained, are of no historical importance, but may have some ethnological value, in common with the legends of most rude tribes. I give them, therefore, much in the form in which I received them.

124 A Pekkan man, Kiniaven, one of my intimate acquaintances, when asked whether his
533 people had any songs like the Badagas, said yes, they had songs, and after entreaties for
538 a specimen, began a queer monotonous sort of drone through his nose. He said there were no words to the song, but when pressed as to the meaning, and what they thought
173 about when singing, he replied they thought about the names of their gods, which he
773 enumerated. After racking his brains a little more, he discovered that they also thought about Dirkish the son of Ēn. What about Dirkish? Of what Dirkish said in lamenting
776 his father Ēn. What did Dirkish say? "Where have you gone, why have you left us, "have you gone to Heaven, what shall I do," &c., &c. Did they sing anything else about Dirkish? Yes, they sang that Dirkish made everything, the kraals, the buffaloes, the Todas, the *pālkhis*, &c., &c., with childishly minute enumeration. Whether these lugubrious "songs without words" really are supposed to convey an idea of Dirkish's labours or lamentations, I cannot say; but the most discriminating ear could not discover any appropriate variations in tune. By further inquiries, I discovered that Ēn was "the first Toda who came" (he had previously said that they were created on the hills), he went to heaven by way of the Avalanche, and was no more seen; that his son was Dirkish, who built the munds and temples *and the Cairns on Seven Cairn hill,* and Nātanēri hill,*† no others; that all the other cairns were built before the Todas came up; that Dirkish also divided the Todas into five tribes; that he did not die, nor go to heaven, but resided as a god on Seven Cairn hill. On being asked who told them all this, they said Kotĕn told them, Kotĕn was one of their ancestors, and brought up the Kotas. On another occasion they said the Kotas were also born on the hills, and explained the discrepancy, by saying that Kotĕn had first bargained with the Kotas saying "You shall be my people, and make pots for us." Possibly the claim of the Kotas to dead buffaloes, mentioned before, formed part of this agreement.

124 Up to this point I had to extract Kiniaven's information piecemeal, but afterwards,
539 finding, I suppose, that no fatal consequences followed his indiscretion, he became communicative, and volunteered the following stories, which he related with, for a Toda,
773 great fluency.

I subsequently verified the stories in all essential points, by inquiries from other Todas.

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* Close to Mūttināḍ mand, near the top of the Segūr Ghât. † To the right of the Crocrmand road.